

## Saving Jamestown

July is the month when we customarily recall our nation's beginnings, because of the Fourth of July and the independence that the date represents. From our history lessons in schools, we learned that Jamestown was the first English settlement in America. Three shiploads of English settlers – 104 men – had been sent to the New World by the London Company to organize a trade base. The hope of finding gold and silver was also a prime incentive for the eager colonists.

They were five months at sea – imagine that in this day of international travel – before reaching Chesapeake Bay in April of 1607. They were 17 days on the James River before deciding upon a site for their settlement. It was not a good choice. The location was low and swampy. The food supply was limited, and the drinking water was virtually undrinkable. Malaria struck, Indians struck and bad weather struck. But all of those factors were not the real dilemma that almost caused the mission to abort and change history.

In his book, *More of Paul Harvey's The Rest of the Story*, the author identifies the problem, based on his research, and the ultimate solution. Jamestown Colony was barely a year old and in serious trouble. Settlement leader Capt. John Smith had the primary issue pegged precisely: His company was comprised of "gentleman adventurers," temperamentally ill-prepared to meet the adversity that lay before them. In an urgent message to his sponsors back home, Capt. Smith said: "Send me some men! Send carpenters, blacksmiths and masons. I would rather have a handful of those than a thousand like those I have."

On Sept. 25, 1608, that handful from London sailed up the James River. The ship *Mary and Margaret* brought six broad-shouldered workmen to Jamestown. That's right, workmen. They became the rescue party. With axes slung over their shoulders, the new men followed Capt. Smith into the forest in search of a likely area to make a clearing. Within three weeks, a plot had been cleared, a furnace had been erected, and the workmen tapped pine trees and began distilling tar and pitch. It was the first factory in the New World.



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The rescue party then proceeded to set up a soap works and a saw mill. By November 1608, a little more than a month after the six workmen had arrived in Jamestown, the other colonists became inspired by their splendid example and were themselves hard at work. According to Capt. Smith, the first English foothold in the New World was saved – specifically – by six able men. Because of them, the English colony of Jamestown survived. Check out their names: Michal Lowicki, Zbigniew Stefanski, Jur Mata, Jan Brogdan, Karol Zrenica and Stanislaw Sadowski. That's right: The six men who rescued Jamestown, the six enthusiastic workers who taught the English how to work, were Polish. That was 12 years before the Mayflower landed.



The lesson for today is obvious. Despite all the dreams, visions and theories that may arise, work is required to make them happen. And those who work creatively and hard inspire everyone.

That is certainly true in Life Care and Century Park, just as it is in other walks of life. Work becomes a test of our will and commitment, and it is the engine of progress.

– Beecher Hunter

Cheapeake Bay

KISKARAWAOK

POCKWODIA